

The Times-Dispatch

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1913.

THE NEED OF A CONVENTION.

Our able and strong-minded friend, the Newport News Press, evidently wants a political vacation. At least, that is the inference we draw from its recent article in opposition to a Democratic convention. It asks if the time has not come to "give the party a rest," and it discourages the effort to gather the Democrats of the Commonwealth in an old-fashioned love-feast to shape an acceptable platform.

Our contemporary's objections to a State convention seem to be (1) that our nominees are "a pretty good platform" in themselves, (2) that a convention might adopt a platform in conflict with the pledges already made by our nominees, (3) that the temperance question, if acted on by such a convention, might create division within the party, and (4), that we are under obligation to our nominees.

So far as three of these objections are concerned, we never learned, Brother Press, that the nominees of the Democratic party were above the party. On the contrary, we have been taught from childhood that "principles, not men" was one of the cardinal tenets of the Democratic faith. We have the utmost confidence in the nominees of the party, and propose to help them in every way, but we are very much mistaken in our estimate of these good Democrats if they would put their personal views above the welfare of the party or would not withdraw from any position they might have assumed were the party as a whole to adopt a different program. Henry Stuart and John Garland Pollard and the rest are "a pretty good platform," but they will be still better if they go before the people with the backing of a strong, constructive policy of government.

As for the possibility of discord and new divisions of sentiment over questions that might be actuated in a convention, our contemporary entirely misses the purpose of a convention such as we have advocated. We do not want a convention that will continue, for instance, a specific policy on temperance or on taxation. We do not want a convention that will consider these questions about which good Democrats disagree. We rather want a "harmony" convention, one that shall bring all the party together and shall show that while we may not be of the same mind on some questions, we have much in common for which we can fight. We could certainly shape a platform broad enough for us all to stand on.

We believe that such a convention can be had, and that such a platform can be adopted. We believe, too, that a convention called to discuss our general problems, would not divide us, but would have a splendid effect in consolidating the party and in showing us all that we are brothers in the political faith.

All of us realize that the breach within the party has widened in recent years, and all of us have wondered why. As we see it, the reason is not the primary system in itself—the vast majority of the party favor this—but in our failure to adopt it, some means of getting together. Why, then, are we Democrats in Virginia who are leaders in their communities and who have much in common, but who are drifting apart, because they never have a chance to shake hands and to talk over their little differences?

Think it over, Brother Press, and see if you would not put the party above the nominees. Think it over and see if more good is not certain to follow such a convention than there can be possible evil.

STEADIER THAN EVER.

Richmond is now one of the chief financial centers of the South, and the underlying strength was aptly illustrated when the Commonwealth Bank closed its doors last week. This bank had several branches and over a million depositors, but the failure caused no excitement nor anything approaching panic among the people. Business went on as usual and confidence was in no whit shaken. This speaks well not only for the inherent strength of the financial situation in Richmond, but for the good character, education and loyalty of its people. Little old Richmond is a solid town, and while we outsiders poke fun at it for pastime, our jokes are merely expressions of our interest and friendly regard—Newport News Press.

We thank you, brother, and we assure you that Richmond is steadier than ever. We regretted that so many of our citizens should have their deposits tied up during the receivership proceedings, and we were very glad that one of our banks had closed its doors. But we knew that Richmond's good business judgment, the diversity of her industries and our citizens' confidence in the future of the town would prevent any dismay at a suspension.

Richmond is a mighty good town in which to bank, Brother Press.

Why pity the sons of great men? Francis H. Meador, son of the Secretary of the Treasury, has just been made a special assistant in the United States Department of Justice, and Bennett Clark, Champ's boy, has been an illuminator of the House of Representatives for some time. Both lads are landing the maxima.

WHAT WAR WOULD COST.

Few of those who have secretly wished for the sensations of a war with Mexico have ever thought what such a war would cost; few of those who have been talking of "national honor" have ever paused to estimate the burden every citizen would be called upon to bear should we be forced to intervene in Mexico.

A comparison of the last war with Mexico will not give an adequate idea of what a national struggle at the present time would be, since the whole science of war has been revolutionized and made much more expensive in recent years, but even at this the figures are formidable enough. When we championed Texas's cause and thereby precipitated a war with Mexico, we assumed a task which it took us two years to complete. During that time we enlisted more than 100,000 men. The total losses on both sides aggregated 40,000, and the expense to this country was more than \$100,000,000. This does not include a dollar of the millions paid in pensions after the peace with Mexico, nor does it take into account the increased expenses of civil government due to the war. Still more appalling is the fact that five of our soldiers fell before a fever for one killed by the bullets of the enemy.

Leaving out of consideration the War Between the States, the expense of which is almost beyond reckoning, the brief conflict with Spain furnishes us with an illustration of what we may expect during a war under modern conditions in a sub-tropical climate. This struggle, as our readers will recall, lasted but four months, and its principal events were crowded into ninety days—a far briefer time than it would take us to subdue Mexico. During these months, however, we lost 2,916 men, of whom all but 200 died of disease. In treasure we spent \$165,000,000, and are still paying pensions.

To make an estimate on this basis, we may reasonably expect that a war with Mexico would cost us \$2,000,000 a day, or some \$730,000,000 the year. In addition we have the word of the Secretary of War that we would have to raise an army of 500,000 men, many of whom would inevitably die of disease among those unhealthy Mexican hills.

Surely the contemplation of these figures should make us rejoice that there is little prospect of war and little chance that a sane administration will let us be embroiled in the squabbles of our sister republic.

GOOD LUCK, DOC AYERS!

Richmond fans will probably see a familiar form for the last time this afternoon when "Doc" Ayers goes to the mound against Portsmouth. On Monday Ayers is to join the young hopefuls whom Clarke Griffith is teaching to climb. Unless the doctor deceives those who have pinned their faith to his good right arm, he will make good, and hereafter will disport himself in the big league, where we shall have few opportunities of seeing him perform.

For ourselves and for the thousands of Richmond people who love clean sports and sportsmen, The Times-Dispatch wishes Ayers good luck. He represents at its best a type that fortunately is becoming more frequent in the great American game. Clean living, well educated, and soon to enter a great profession, Ayers has given Richmond a splendid example of good sportsmanship. He was, as we remember, fearfully "green" when he joined the Richmond team, and might easily have been discouraged, but he had that bulldog will that belongs to the Virginia mountaineer. Instead of dissipating, he kept his powerful physique in form; instead of loafing, he worked hard at his craft; instead of malingering, he was ready for service whenever he was called on. His brilliant record, equaled only in this league by that of Jack Quinn, is splendid proof of his staying qualities, and splendid testimony of his determination.

Richmond fans are tremendously fond of the doctor, and are willing to wager that he will become a great sensation in the American League as he has been in Virginia. They believe that the same persistence, good headwork and physical strength which developed him into his present form will enable him to remain with a club which boasts a Johnson and a Boelling. Though the doctor hails from historic Hillsville, Richmond people count him as their product, and shall follow his career with the same interest that they watched the other pitchers who "went up" from Richmond—Leever, Chesbro, Tammehill, Boelling and the rest.

A LACK OF COMMON SENSE.

The shocked sensibilities of a peasant in sympathy with Thaw rather than the strategy of the New York lawyer, seem to be responsible at first sight for the incarceration of William T. Jerome on the charge of gambling in Canada. Mr. Jerome will probably think otherwise. He should have done his thinking in advance, and should have had the common sense to behave himself in a country where he is appearing in some measure as the representative of a foreign State. To play poker with a "cent ante" is not a capital offense, but in the circumstance it is certainly a breach of good manners and of good taste.

How unkind the senior Senator from Georgia was to the paraphraser when he let himself be re-elected over his opponent? If he had been defeated, the series could have said that the Georgia people had decided to bring the Bacon home.

If President Wilson comes to the Virginia state fair, he is guaranteed a peer at more knifefights, near, close and never, of ex-Presidents of the United States than anywhere else in "this broad land of ours."

Two great "returns" will live in the history of our time—Roosevelt's "return from Elia" and Thaw's "return from Canada."

SAINTS OF SCIENCE.

From Rome comes the news that the Congregation of Rites has ordered the beatification of Bernadette Soubirous, the peasant girl, who first gave fame to the fountains of Lourdes. This may or may not be preliminary to formal canonization, but in any event it deserves the passing attention of a busy world intent on things material.

There was about this humble girl much of that rapture that made Jeanne d'Arc immortal. Seeing against the rocks of Massabieille an apparition of the Mother of Christ, she was led by a Voice to the rocks, whence, at her touch, flowed the waters that now are used for the relief of thousands. Not all the questionings of the skeptics or the examination of church fathers could shake her faith nor all the applause of thankful thousands could spoil her simplicity. Living and dying a Sister of Charity, she richly deserves the honor the church has given her.

But even more interesting is the report that the Congregation of Rites is still considering the establishment of a separate order of sainthood, or at least of beatification, for those men and women whose contributions to science have made millions happy. We are told that the Church of Rome wishes to do honor to the memory of these men, and is seeking now an appropriate manner.

To our mind nothing could be more fitting, for if ever men deserve to live in the grateful memory of the world, they are those whose lives have been given to the relief of human suffering. Edward Jenner's long investigations of smallpox; Louis Pasteur, with his discovery of the antirabic treatment and his vast contributions to bacteriology; Lord Lister and his methods of aseptic surgery; Behring, with his diphtheria antitoxin that has saved at least 2,000,000 lives; Koch, with his investigations of sleeping-sickness and tuberculosis; Ehrlich and his wonderful salvarsan; Walter Reed and his yellow fever prevention—these are animals as inspiring as the lives of saints; these are deeds that hasten the coming of the kingdom.

We do not know what action the church in its wisdom will take, but we hope that something will be done to transmit to remotest posterity the memory of these saints of science. For them no honor is too high; to their unselfishness no altar too lofty may be reared.

BEHOLD THE LAW.

This morning's news from Harry Thaw is sensational, but not necessarily important. Ordered to be deported by the immigration authorities, Thaw has been granted a new writ of habeas corpus, returnable to Judge Gervais, of the King's Bench, Montreal.

Save for those who have a certain beehymose sympathy with the murderer of Stanford White, this case is interesting at present only in the light it throws on the devious operations of the law. But viewed from this angle, Thaw's daily adventures are at least striking.

The whole scene is set for the display of every device known to the law. A rich young man, whose mother is willing to pay any price for his freedom, has found himself in a very unusual predicament, and to extricate himself has employed the best lawyers available. The latter, with the searchlight of publicity upon them, have the chance to collect good American dollars and fresh legal laurels at the same time. Accordingly, they are holding midnight councils, are ransacking the law libraries and are trying every plan that promises the least success. Writs of habeas corpus are being demanded and declined, one hearing gives place to another, jurisdiction changes over-night, the judges of practically every court are being importuned for relief. No man can tell what will be the end or when it will be reached.

And when all is said and done, what is the issue over which these able lawyers are fighting? Simply the question as to whether or not Harry Thaw, an escaped lunatic, is a tourist or an immigrant. Were he less famous, the case would have been decided in half an hour, and Thaw would have been advised to recross the boundary over which he fled. As it is, the law is made ridiculous and Justice made a jest.

During the absence of a young woman from Charlotte, N. C., for a period of two weeks, a newspaper of that city mourned her thusly: "As the spring would miss the beauty and the perfume of the blossoming flowers; as the woodland would miss the carolings of its song birds which entwine every twig with a wreath of song; as the mountain brook would miss the melody born in its rippling tides as they go singing on their journey to the sea, just so will this brilliant jewel be missed." It looks as if another Mecklenburg declaration has been or is about to be made.

A Virginia girl who knows how to make a beaten biscuit can take 10 cents' worth of ingredients and concoct the bait that will land her the very crookiest she prefers above all others.

Pretty women are said to be disappearing from England, but the last ugly woman left Richmond seven years ago.

Pursuit of the squirrel continues a favorite pastime in Southeast Virginia. The Farmville correspondent of the Appomattox Times-Virginian, reports that "Treasurer Paulkett came in from a squirrel hunt yesterday with eleven bushy tails swinging from his belt, and one of them met death with a hickory nut firmly grasped between its teeth. And the treasurer is about the only squirrel hunter left among the living, so far as I'm advised. And, speaking of stews, they make a royal one. No perfect Brunswick stew without squirrel meat." Don't leave out the muskrat, brother Southsider.

The Boston Transcript hits the centre of the target when it avows that "what New England needs is a new New Haven."

ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT

By ROY K. MOULTON.

The Diary of a Nonchalant.
A sailboat is a thing whose floor sets at an angle of 90 degrees, through force of habit when there is no wind blowing, and whose floor is its straight up and down like a dining-room wall when there is a breeze.

A man to be an expert sailor should have vacuum cups in his feet like a fly so that he can walk right up the face of a flat surface that is stood on end and wiggling furiously.

I had a ways watched the cute things as they darted about the bay, blither and yon, spilling their loads of precious human freight at least three or four times every trip, and marveled at the foolhardiness of such sailors. If any man had predicted that I was going out in my friend's sailboat, I would have called that person a liar. I think my friend got me aboard by resorting to hypnosis. At least, I didn't realize it at all until we were forty rods from the deck and gaining headway every second. I was so terrified that I lay flat across the deck. When the yacht heeled over one way, my feet dragged in the water, and once I felt the water up to my knees. When we heeled over the other way, my head was under water as far as my collar button.

They were a jolly lot of dogs on that vessel. They took a drink all around while the deck was occupying a perpendicular position and the sail was almost lying flat on the water. They said they hoped the old sloop would tip over, as they hadn't had a particle of real excitement thus far this summer.

At that the skipper gave a vicious jerk at the tiller and we sailed around like a \$200 automobile taking a corner on a slippery afternoon. The boom swung around and knocked three of them into the bay and then we tipped over.

The life-saving crew got me about 9 o'clock that night after I had floated all around the bay seven times in the upturned boat. The rest of the party swam ashore and had a fish supper at the hotel which I had planned earlier in the day. I was the worst, but they got along very well without me.

They called me a gay old dog, and maybe I am, but I am not a water spaniel. Never again on a sailboat for your Uncle Abiah.

A Lament.

I shot an arrow into the air; it fell in the distance, I knew not where, till a neighbor said it killed his calf, and I had to pay him six and a half (\$6.50). I thought some poison to slay some rats and a neighbor swore it killed his cats and rather than argue across the fence I paid him four dollars and fifty cents (\$4.50). One night I sat pulling a toy balloon and I hoped it would soar till it reached the moon, but the candle fell out on a farmer's straw and he said I must settle or go to law. And that is the way with a random shot, it never hits the proper spot, and a joke you spring that you think so smart may leave a wound in some fellow's heart.

Ever Know This Man?

Ebenezer Amos Blue journeyed his existence through the world in Henry, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall and Clay. Nothing seemed to go just right; And he wandered through the town spreading seeds of discontent. On his shoulders, sure as fate, Rested all the cares of state. It was his life mission to pull his country safely through. He sadly opened his eyes in the morning, and he said: "Fearing that he'd wake up dead, Worried when he rose next morn. Said he wished he'd never been born. He sadly opened his eyes in the morn. 'Weather breeder,' he'd declare, 'Folks would walk around a block To dodge Ebenezer knock.'

Other fellows got ahead. Spite of all that Elben said, Spite of all the warnings he Gave them absolutely free. He sadly opened his eyes in the morn. In the true detective style. Worrying he couldn't work. Didn't leave much time to shirk. No one seemed to realize, Ever and every day, fair 'Weather breeder,' he'd declare, 'Folks would walk around a block To dodge Ebenezer knock.'

At the age of thirty years.

Voice of the People

Incomparable Poe!
To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch: Sir,—I have noticed two open letters in your "Voice of the People" columns from James C. Renshaw, of Charlottesville, Va. I have also read several articles bearing upon Mr. Renshaw's first letter, which appeared in your issue of August 16. A controversy seems to have arisen. This controversy sprang from a statement made by Mr. Renshaw in an editorial on O. Henry. You said that "the Old Dominion could

be the world in Henry, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall and Clay."

Mr. Renshaw is exactly, unalterably correct when he says that, in number, Virginia is outstripped seriously by the Plymouth Rock country. She is away ahead in numbers.

But what is literature? Is it mere volume? Is it sheets of paper written out? What is it? Some dictionaries condemn it to writings of "superior merit." Some experts divide it into ten divisions or types. If you will all right, but let's set off the world's literary figures of New England against the world's literary figure of Virginia.

This little controversy has done a strange thing. It has resurrected Henry Ward Beecher, whom fame and posterity have buried, powered, forgotten and said "green be the turf above thee." It has belittled and bemired Edgar Allan Poe, who is destined to become, if he have not already done so, the sun of the planetary system of American letters. Strange!

Let us dispense with the vices of genius. That much more glory to him who "reaches the heights" with the burden of his discords self to breed. Mr. Renshaw is precisely, incontrovertibly right in this view, which he promulgates with profound gusto and at length in your issue of September 1. I agree absolutely with the gentleman in this view. Then let Poe be a "notorious drunkard" all his life, according to Dr. Rufus Griswold and James Renshaw, and not according to N. P. Willis, than whom none knew him better and most e works. Let us marvel apace at the fantastic architecture wrought by a brain great in spite of its vagaries; immitable, though weak. Ho, hero!

To whom does he belong? Born in Boston, of Mr. James and I defy any man to prove absolutely which—in January or February—same—1809. He came to Norfolk, Va., when an infant, and was left an orphan in Richmond, Va., too, in 1811. Here he was adopted by John Allan and his wife, and lived in their home in Richmond until they took him abroad in 1815. They returned in 1820. Poe then went to the academies in Richmond, and later to the University of Virginia, and—but we all know his life. I would like to have him placed, Mr. Renshaw and all the critics, and all the works on American literature give him to the South. The members of the New England school never claimed him. They gave him to the South. If he belongs to the South, he belongs to Virginia. Does he belong to Virginia? Where did he spend the formative period of his life? Where was he educated? If Edgar Poe isn't a Virginia writer, he's a nondescript. To whose glory did Napoleon add—Corsica's or France's?

THE SEASONS' VAUDEVILLE

Two More Acts and the Bill Is Ended.

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Across the footlights Summer leans
And lightly curtsies to the throng,
While Autumn waits behind the scenes
To sing her sad, yet tender, song.

Then bluff old Winter's bells will chime
To entertain the wondering town
With goodly cheer till Father Time
Shall ring the old year's curtain down.

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